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NEWS
FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Know your Museum better

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GREEK GOD STILL POTENT

The Greek God Eros, though tiny, was a powerful god. You will find representations of him in the Greek collection of the Royal Ontario Museum. For example, you will see him (or all that is left of him) perched on the shoulder of a large statute at the head of the first flight of stairs. What woman would not enjoy the whispering of the tempter close to her ear? Eros is the Greek counterpart of the Roman Cupid.

Recently Eros has come to the museum in the form of two tiny golden pendants to earrings. Ladies of fashion of the late Greek period all wore earrings, usually of gold, and very often with these loves or "cupids." The two chubby little figures on the museum's new gift hang from flower-like rosettes that nestle against the lobes of the ear. In the centre of the flower were set bright-red stones to enrich the gaiety of the violet-tinged pure gold.

We are reminded these June days that Eros (or Cupid) is still powerful. His bow-arm is strong and his aim true.

SHADFLY SEASON APPROACHES

In late June and early July every year the Royal Ontario Museum receives reports and queries about swarms of certain insects. This year will probably be no exception. For a few days the shores of our larger lakes will teem with myriads of long-tailed, gauzy-winged creatures, the shadflies, or if you prefer, May flies, herring-flies, fish-flies.

In North Bay, store-front awnings and street lamps will be festooned with them. They will be swept into heaps on the streets. At Lake Simcoe these annual swarms will bring lake herring into shore. Cedar Waxwings and other birds will have a picnic. The beaches of hundreds of lakes will be rimmed with continuous windrows of shadfly remains. For a few days everyone will be conscious of these insects, then lose sight of them for another year.

Now for the background of the shadflies,—there are many smaller species that are usually overlooked. The big kinds that come into public notice have an odd life history. In their immature stage they spend one or two years as burrowers in soft lake bottoms. They are found in water as deep as 45 feet and serve as food for fish. When nearly mature they come to the surface and the winged adult emerges. The adult, a graceful creature, is very short lived, since it cannot feed. A day or two suffices for mating, and laying eggs upon the water. Then they die,—lowly workers in mud for a year or two and monarchs for a day. The individual has sacrificed himself for the race.

MUSEUM HOURS

When in Toronto you will find the Museum open free from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and on Sundays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. As a war measure it is closed on Mondays. There is a 15c. admission charge on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

GREENLAND SUPPLIES "ICE-STONE"

Greenland contributes an item of considerable importance to the conduct of the war. In the southern tip, just south of the Arctic Circle, there occurs the only existing commercial deposit of the mineral, cryolite. Snow-white in appearance, it is often called "ice-stone" because it closely resembles glacial ice.

The enormous pit in Greenland from which the cryolite is obtained lies very close to one of the deep, narrow fjords so common in that region. Only a relatively thin wall of rock holds back the ocean waters. Messrs. Hans Lundberg and H. S. Scott who examined the deposit last summer have presented the Royal Ontario Museum with a group of Greenland minerals showing cryolite and many of the less important minerals associated with it. These are now on display.

Cryolite is essential in the manufacture of aluminium. Once mined as an ore of that metal, it is now used almost entirely as a flux in obtaining aluminium from the chief ore, bauxite. Canada has no aluminium ore but great electrical power is available and quantities of Greenland cryolite are now shipped to this country to be used in the manufacture of aluminium from South American bauxite.

NEWS, GEOGRAPHY AND THE MUSEUM

Current events have made geography the most universal study of our times. Undoubtedly he who follows the daily news increases his knowledge of the divisions of the earth's surface. With great rapidity our attention shifts from country to country and zone to zone. Today's news interest may be focussed on some humid tropical island in the south seas but tomorrow the locale of our concern may be a cold, fog-drenched coast within the Arctic circle. Through imagination we are all world travellers and we incorporate into our daily speech place names from a hundred tongues.

A visit to the Royal Ontario Museum can aid materially in making far-flung countries and peoples less distant and more real. One will find examples of the handicraft of men of all creeds and colours which reveal their culture, their problems and aspirations. He will see the animals from foreign tundra, desert and forest, and exotic minerals and stones from the earth's crust half-way around the globe. The Museum stimulates world-mindedness and does much to counteract isolationism.

AGATES FOR JUNE

The agate is usually acepted as the birthstone for June. It is one of the many varieties of the common mineral, quartz. Examples in the Royal Ontario Museum show that it can be anything from drab to extremely beautiful with irregular bands of colour. It is quite plentiful and is not ordinarily of very great value although it was once believed to increase the wearer's ability to acquire riches.

In a theoretical air-ship of the early eighteenth century, large agates over-head were expected to gain magnetism from the sun's rays. With the aid of powerful magnets they would help in lifting the ship. Unfortunately it did not work. Agates are still of no use as a substitute for gasoline. They are, however, popular as stones in almost every type of jewellery.